Using WhatsApp

Authored By

Muftī Muhammad Murshid Qāsmī

Teacher and Head of Ifta, Jāmi'ah Islāmiah Masīh Al Ulūm, Bangalore

Translated by

M Abūbakr

First Edition: January 2020

CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S NOTE 4
TRANSLATORS FOREWORD 6
FOREWORD 11
FOREWORD 13
FOREWORD 15
FOREWORD 17
PREFACE 18
INTRODUCTION 20
USING WHATSAPP 22
Wasting time 22
Wasting other people's time 25
Distracts peace of mind 26
The sin of spreading all kinds of news 27
Background 28
Background 30
Junaid Jamshed's photo 32
An incident 34
Should every kind of factual information be necessarily shared? 35
Whoever narrates whatever he hears is a liar 36
Carelessness can lead to slander 36
Taking photos 37
Not even safe in the Haram 39

First incident 40
Second incident 40
Third incident 40
Fourth incident 41
The loss of interaction and sociability 43
Thought-provoking incident 43
A joke 44
Misuse of the Internet 45
The Internet is addictive 46
Another incident 46
Wasting money 47
A plea to the public 48
Request to the 'Ulamā 49
Request to students 51
Positive use of WhatsApp and the Internet 55
WhatsApp's legal status 56
The Internet's legal status 61
The Fatwā 62
Resolutions of Islamic Fiqh academy, Jam'iyyat 'Ulamā Al-Hind 64
A Final request 65

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the year 2015/1437 I wrote an article titled *"Āp WhatsApp iste'māl kare magar..."* for a popular magazine, *"Takbīr Musalsal"* issued by my beloved institute: Jāmi'ah Islāmiyyah Masīh Al-'Ulūm, Bangalore. By the Grace of Almighty Allāh this article received much popularity and taking into consideration the current times and its needs some friends advised me that it should be detailed and published in book form.

After much deliberation, through the Grace of Allāh this task was also completed in the year 2015/1439 and within a few days the first edition was published. After the first edition, I received requests from various regions for an English Translation. Sincere individuals from as far as the UK requested for an English translation; however, due to a few reasons I could not fulfil this request while I was finding it very difficult to plainly ignore the requests of so many sincere individuals.

I was spending days in this dilemma when one day, unexpectedly, I received a message from an unknown individual from the UK requesting for an English translation of the book, *"Āp WhatsApp iste'māl kare magar..."* I replied in the negative, but also mentioned that efforts for an English translation were ongoing. This was the end of the conversation and after this, I felt a greater need for an English translation, however, a lack of means created obstacles and this left me troubled.

Nevertheless, I was spending days in this worry when one day, all of a sudden I received a WhatsApp message containing a PDF of an English translation along with a short message: "This is an English translation that I have completed, take a look".

My heart was at once filled with immense happiness and I thanked Allah. This translator was the very Mawlānā Abūbakr Sāheb from the UK that I mentioned above. Nonetheless, it was Allāh's will that this task be completed at a specific time at the hands of a specific person and so it was completed. After completion, through Mawlānā's assistance the English translation was sent to the press to be published in India.

Mawlānā's efforts did not stop there and it was intended that the book get published in the UK. As a result this English translation is now in your hands in the UK. I hereby grant Mawlānā the permission to publish the book and take full responsibility in the UK. May Allah accept this translation as much as the first Urdu edition and may He grant Mawlānā Abūbakr the best of rewards. Āmīn!

Muhammad Murshid
Jāmi'ah Islāmiyyah Masīh Al-'Ulūm,
Bangalore, India
30/5/1441- 26/1/2020

TRANSLATORS FOREWORD

The world we live in is indeed very advanced, and the future seems much more advanced. However, what the future really holds is only known to Allāh, as we plan and Allāh plans and Allāh is the best of planners. Will the speed of technological process continue to rise exponentially or will it take a sudden fall and take us back to the primitive days? This is a question that will always hover over our minds.

Our world, since its inception has gone through many stages: each era, together with its successes, has always had its own setbacks and problems. There was the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Agricultural Age, Industrial Age, and it seems like we are living in the Technological Age. It may seem that we have surpassed all previous nations in technological advancements, but when we go deep into history and look at the era of Sulaymān AS then we realise that we are not the only ones.

Technology, which was intended to bring comfort and convenience to our lives, has instead created innumerable problems and inconveniences. Day by day, new devices, apps and tools are being introduced to our innocent Muslim youth who, blindly forgetting their own identity as Muslims, fanatically fall into the trap of these new inventions.

Over the years, we have been introduced to many devices and apps, and the truth is that the more advanced

and high-tech these inventions get the more mischief they create, and the closer they get to the Fitnah of Dajjāl, which is based entirely upon deception and fraud. Those of my fellow brothers who have been victims of such deception and fraud through these inventions will surely perceive this Dajjālī threat.

These apps and devices are not entirely evil. They have a positive side and many upright Muslims and Islamic institutions have gained much benefit through their positive use. We live in this world and as such we are bound to fulfil our duty as the vicegerents of Allah on Earth. We cannot run away from the materials of this world rather, they are here for us to use. In fact, without any discrimination, we can say that everything on Earth was created for the believers. The Ahādith tells us that if there were no believers to worship and call unto Allāh then the world would cease to exist. There is nobody who has a greater right over the material resources of this earth than the Muslims. How did this splendid civilisation that we witness today with technology at its peak come about? Who paved the way for it? Peruse through the pages of history and we find the ubiquity of illiteracy that existed not only in Arabia but throughout the great empires of its neighbours. It was Nabi Muhammad ﷺ who came and not only educated humans but educated humanity. His first message was, "Read". It was as though he held humanity's finger and took it to its first day at school. It was upon this foundation that the Arab scholars paved the way for the European renaissance. We and all of humanity shall remain indebted to Nabī Muhammad ﷺ till the last day and

beyond. If it wasn't for Muhammad ﷺ, we, in the twenty first century, and Europe would still be wandering in the dark ages.

It is only right and just that we use all this technology in the way shown by Allāh and His Beloved Prophet Nabī Muhammad ﷺ. We have a right to use these tools for our benefit, but the truth is that many of us are misusing these blessings, which have now become a fitnah for the entire Muslim Ummah.

Over the years, we have witnessed several landmark advances, from the first email sent in 1971; Facebook in 2004; Twitter in 2006 to WhatsApp today, which, at the time of writing (2019) has over 1.5 billion users worldwide.

WhatsApp is indeed a very useful and beneficial app for those who can discern between right and wrong, as for those who use it unnecessarily and inappropriately, they have created nothing but discord and fitnah within the Ummah, as a result of which we are witnessing the deplorable state of the great Ummah of Nabī ﷺ.

We are social creatures and we thrive upon socialising with people. These social media tools are indeed a great way to socialise with people, but unfortunately, they are increasingly being used for non-social reasons. For us to take the right benefit from these tools it is important that we understand our limits. To what extent are we to use these tools? We must think and ponder: is it prudent to forward everything we hear or receive? Is it prudent to

forward unnecessary content, photos and videos which contain images of non-mahārim? Many a time, we forward a religious video on a group with a good intention, but we don't realise that the contents within it creates doubts about Islām, doubts about sincere religious groups and doubts about scholars. This was not the way of the Sahāba. If we really have a passion to propagate and spread the message of Allah and Rasūl ﷺ, then we must take the route of sacrifice that the Sahāba and our Salaf took, and not the easy route, sitting on our couches with a platter of food next to us forwarding and sharing unverified, controversial literature in the name of Islām.

Alhamdulillāh, whenever the world has thrown something new at us, the 'Ulamā have always guided us. They have kept an eye over contemporary issues and through their spiritual insight have always directed us to the safe zone. It is only befitting that we follow their guidelines.

Muftī Muhammad Murshid Qāsmī, may Allāh reward him, took on the effort, worry and concern to compile this book discussing the misuse of WhatsApp. It has opened our eyes to a few realities and given us a way forward under the guidance of our senior scholars. Muftī Sāheb's book, *'Āp WhatsApp iste'māl kare magar...'* was the first kind of Islamic literature that I had come across in regard to WhatsApp. It was much needed that the Muslim Ummah possess some sort of Islamic material regarding such matters, so that they can use modern technology without harming their religion. Muftī

Sāheb has discussed the many harms and benefits of using WhatsApp as well as various other important factors regarding social media and its use in modern society. These discussions are of great benefit for every individual, whether you are minimally impacted by our technologically driven world or whether you are completely engrossed in it. Therefore, I personally took up the task of translating this Urdu book so that its contents can benefit a larger audience. I confess to my weakness and incapability in that I have no expertise in this field and nor do I have any academic background, but it is only through the mercy of Allāh that he has allowed me to complete this task. All praises are for Allāh!

Lastly, I would like to sincerely thank Hāfez Ismā'īl Chothiā and Muhammad Lūnat who sacrificed their precious time to assist with proofreading and editing the translation of this book and specially took time out to proofread and edit this book. I can only pray that Allāh rewards them both abundantly in this world and the Hereafter. Āmīn.

May Allāh accept all our efforts and give us all the ability to follow the way of Allāh and His Rasūl ﷺ. Āmīn.

Translator
13 December 2019
16 Rabī al-Ākhir 1441Ah

FOREWORD

(Muftī Sa'īd Ahmad Pālanpūrī Sāheb - Teacher of Hadīth and senior lecturer at Dārul 'Ulūm Deoband)

نحمده ونصلی علی رسوله الکریم اما بعد!

WhatsApp, Internet and the like are inventions of our times, and essentially these are useful inventions. However, due to the obscene and immoral environment of our society, these inventions are used more for wrong and wasteful reasons than the right ones. The technological developments of our era and an ample provision of resources have made access to these inventions terrifyingly easy. As a result, a large sector of the public has become so obsessed with these inventions that they are no longer able to differentiate between right and wrong, between what is necessity and what is a waste of time. Rather, a lack of fear of Allāh and concern for the hereafter has deprived them of this sense of feeling. Unfortunately, even the students and teachers of schools, colleges and Islamic institutions could not save themselves from this obsession which has consequently affected their studies.

In view of this, there was a need to identify the misuses of WhatsApp, Internet etc, and to make the public aware of its harms and to prevent its misuse in light of the Qurān and Sunnah, so that the Ummah does not divert away from its original purpose of life, and to guide those who are being misled by misusing WhatsApp and the Internet.

May Allāh reward honourable Muftī Muhammad Murshid Qāsmī – Teacher at Jāmi'ah Islāmiyah Masīh Al-'Ulūm, Bangalore - who wrote an article in this regard, wherein he has discussed the misuses of WhatsApp and the Internet in detail, and has stressed the point that if these tools are not used appropriately, they will cause more harm than benefit.

I pray to Allāh that He accepts his effort and makes it a means of benefit for the Muslim Ummah.

Sa'īd Ahmad Pālanpūrī
Khādim Dārul 'Ulūm Deoband
19 Sha'bān 1438 Ah

FOREWORD

(Muftī Sa'īd Ahmad Pālanpūrī Sāheb - Teacher of Hadīth and senior lecturer at Dārul 'Ulūm Deoband)

نحمده ونصلی علی رسوله الکریم اما بعد!

WhatsApp, Internet and the like are inventions of our times, and essentially these are useful inventions. However, due to the obscene and immoral environment of our society, these inventions are used more for wrong and wasteful reasons than the right ones. The technological developments of our era and an ample provision of resources have made access to these inventions terrifyingly easy. As a result, a large sector of the public has become so obsessed with these inventions that they are no longer able to differentiate between right and wrong, between what is necessity and what is a waste of time. Rather, a lack of fear of Allāh and concern for the hereafter has deprived them of this sense of feeling. Unfortunately, even the students and teachers of schools, colleges and Islamic institutions could not save themselves from this obsession which has consequently affected their studies.

In view of this, there was a need to identify the misuses of WhatsApp, Internet etc, and to make the public aware of its harms and to prevent its misuse in light of the Qurān and Sunnah, so that the Ummah does not divert away from its original purpose of life, and to guide those who are being misled by misusing WhatsApp and the Internet.

May Allāh reward honourable Muftī Muhammad Murshid Qāsmī – Teacher at Jāmi'ah Islāmiyah Masīh Al-'Ulūm, Bangalore - who wrote an article in this regard, wherein he has discussed the misuses of WhatsApp and the Internet in detail, and has stressed the point that if these tools are not used appropriately, they will cause more harm than benefit.

I pray to Allāh that He accepts his effort and makes it a means of benefit for the Muslim Ummah.

Sa'īd Ahmad Pālanpūrī
Khādim Dārul 'Ulūm Deoband
19 Sha'bān 1438 Ah

FOREWORD

(Muftī Muhammad Shu'aibullāh Khān, Miftāhī Sāheb – founder and principal: Jāmi'ah Islamiyyah Masīh Al-'Ulūm, Bangalore)

الحمد لله رب العلمين والصلوة والسلام على سيد المرسلين، اما بعد!

The apparent development and material success of the modern world has established its prestige over the public to such an extent that it appears they no longer have the ability to think for themselves. They have become so enamoured by these startling technological advancements that their own intellects have ceased to work. Due to numerous, dangerous and toxic influences, these inventions are slowly but surely poisoning human minds and souls, weakening our faith and passion for worship and thereby involving us in all types of sins.

Despite this, many "intellectuals" have become oblivious to these dangers and have been awe-struck by its apparent glamour and glitter.

One such invention that has caused much upheaval nowadays is "WhatsApp". No doubt, it could be used in the best way possible for positive and useful purposes. However, today, it is sadly being used for futile, if not, harmful purposes. This book has been written with the sole purpose of creating this worry and concern within the Muslim Ummah. Mawlānā Muftī Murshid Qasmī initially wrote this article for the monthly magazine *"Takbīr Musalsal"* which was read with much approval by various sectors of the public, and it was also

published in many other publications. Mawlānā thereafter compiled it into a book form with additional notes.

I have read it and found it to be very beneficial. I pray that Allāh accepts it and makes it beneficial for others.

Shu'aibullāh Khān Miftahī
21/81438Ah, 18/5/2017Ce

FOREWORD

(Mawlānā Muhammad ‘Abd al-Qawī Sāheb- Principal: Jāmi’ah Ashraf Al-‘Ulūm, Hyderabād)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، و به نستعين

The speed at which information technology is growing nowadays is something that was not seen in the near past. The mobile phone is indeed a useful device and a valuable means of communication. However, it has brough with it surplus of features that have occupied every layman and scholar in our contemporary world. As a result, all spheres of life whether in education, administration, politics, economics and culture have been adversely impacted by the misuse of these services. It is true that the services provided by these mobile phones are to some extent beneficial; however, their nature is concisely encompassed by the verse of the Quran:

“و اثمهما اكبر من نفعهما”.

Their harm is greater than their benefit

The manner in which WhatsApp has ruined our precious time is beyond explanation, and indeed there is no need to explain, as the evidences are clear and rife. Unfortunately, it has also become a favourite hobby of the scholars and servants of Dīn. Day and night, they are occupied with WhatsApp, unaware of the great responsibility they have of safeguarding Islām and the Ummah. They have become so engrossed, sending and receiving useless and nonsense content that sometimes we think ‘WhatsApp’ is some sort of magic that no

sooner do they come into contact with it their minds stop working. Like an alcoholic, we become so intoxicated that we are unaware of our own surroundings, and at times, very liberally, we go on using it late into the night.

Sadly, men whose nights were spent in du’ā, worship, reading the Qurān and studying, today, because of the Internet, WhatsApp and social media only Allāh knows where and how their nights are being spent. It has darkened their hearts, disturbed their minds, and day by day, they are morally deteriorating, so much so, that rights are being violated and family and relatives are being deprived of love and attention. This obsession has gone to such heights that even at the cost of all damages we are not ready to forsake it.

Honourable Muftī Muhammad Murshid Qasmī has addressed this subject, and has compiled a very effective and beneficial book in regard to the harms and benefits of WhatsApp, which I have found to be very beneficial. At his request, after writing these few words of support and encouragement I pray that Allāh accepts his sincere effort and makes this book a means of reformation for the Ummah. Amīn!

Wassalām
Muhammad ‘Abd-Al-Qawī
2 Ramadhān Al-Mubārak 1438Ah

FOREWORD

(Mawlānā Muftī 'Abdullāh Ma'rufī Sāheb – lecturer of Hadīth, Dārul ''Ulūm Deoband)

The Internet, WhatsApp, Facebook etc are inventions of our times. Essentially, these inventions are useful and beneficial. Those who have been gifted with a sound mind and a sense of understanding can carry out many religious and educational activities through its positive use. However, the truth is that such people are few in number. The masses have deviated from its appropriate use and have become senseless in its incorrect use, to such an extent that they no longer realise that these things are leading us to destruction, ruining our precious time and along with this placing a burden of sins on our shoulders. Day by day, interest for these useless activities is increasing, and its harms have been hidden away from us. For this reason, it was necessary to bring to the attention of the Muslim Ummah the correct use of these inventions, and warn them of its incorrect use so that they may seek to save themselves from its harms. With this worry and concern at the heart of it, honourable Muftī Muhammad Murshid Qāsmī has compiled a book on this subject. The honourable Muftī sāheb informed me of its contents, and I found it to be very beneficial for the Muslim Ummah. I pray to Allāh that He accepts this concise book and makes it a means of salvation for the author. Amīn!

'Abdullāh Ma'rūfī
8 Ramadhān Al-Mubārak 1438

PREFACE

Approximately two years ago, I wrote an article for a monthly magazine *"Takbīr Musalsal"*, issued by Jāmiah Masīh Al 'Ulūm, India, Bangalore (October 2014 Ce/ Muharram 1437Ah). In this article I had made some requests to the readers in regards to the negative use of WhatsApp. This article came to the attention of a famous scholar from Hydrebād, Mawlānā 'Abdul Qawī Db. After reading the article, He published it in his monthly magazine, *"Ashraf Al Jarā'id"*. May Allāh reward him.

I only came to know of this when I received a letter from brother Hāfiz Muhammad Anwar Khalīl who read the article in the monthly magazine, *"Ashraf Al Jarā'id"*. After reading the article and finding its contents to be highly beneficial, he advised me to compile it into a book form.

After considering his advice, I also found it appropriate to publish it in a book form. Therefore, I discussed it with a few colleagues and they were also of the opinion that it should be published in a book form as there is a greater need than before that the Muslims are made aware of the improper use of WhatsApp. Taking this into consideration, I reviewed the article and now, after a few amendments and additions, I present the Article in a book form.

I pray that Allāh accepts my efforts and makes it a source of benefit for the Muslim Ummah. Amīn.

Lastly, in accordance to the Hadith:

"من لم يشكر الناس لم يشكر الله"

(He who is not thankful to people is not thankful to Allāh),

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who supported me through their valuable words of advice and guidance. Similarly, I would also like to thank all those who have contributed towards the publication of this book through any minimal way. In particular, I would like to thank honourable Mawlānā Nīthār Ahmad, who stood by me, very eagerly assisting me from the inception of the book to its final stages in the press. May Allah reward him immensely.

Muhammad Murshid Qāsmī
Jāmi'ah Masīh Al-'Ulūm, India, Bangalore
13 Rajab 1438 Ah/ 11 April 2017

INTRODUCTION

Almost everyone today is familiar with modern-day, widely-used tools: the Internet, WhatsApp and Facebook. And unfortunately, every individual, be it man or woman, old or young, Bedouin or city-dweller, literate or illiterate is enjoying its services at their own comfort, wasting the fruits of their labour and the valuable moments of their life behind it, using it in many unnecessary and sinful avenues beyond their legitimate needs, and accumulating a burden of sins in exchange for the sacrifice of their money and time.

It is sad that we do not have time to sit for a moment and seriously consider how to use these tools correctly. Until today, nothing has saddened me more than the carelessness shown in this regard, the reason being is that every sector of the public has become prey to its misuse, and it pains me more to see the 'Ulamā and students of knowledge satisfied with these inventions, neglecting their purpose and sacrificing their valuable time.

While on the one hand I found this misuse to be very common, I had not come across any noteworthy writing or lecture that highlighted its harms and misuses, thereby warning the Ummah. Therefore, in spite of my incapability and weakness, I personally took up the task, and a thought came into my heart that as far as I could, I should draw the Ummah's attention to its positive uses, and prevent them from its misuse. For this, I found it necessary that the serious harms of the Internet and

WhatsApp, and the evils that are borne out of these harms should be presented to the Ummah so that they may save themselves from such evils. Therefore, we draw our attention to a few important points, which have been largely neglected.

USING WHATSAPP

Wasting time

Time is the most valuable asset we have; it cannot be bought and is a priceless commodity. Gold, silver, diamonds, pearls and money can all be recovered after being lost and in fact, regained to acquire more than what is lost. However, time is such an asset that once it is lost not a single second can be recovered. If time is not safeguarded then it will melt away like ice, and we will lose all opportunities to benefit from this asset.

To this day, all those who have made a name for themselves in history, and whichever field of life they have attained success, have done so by valuing their time. When we read how our predecessors valued time, it seems as if they were machines working round the clock. Not a single second of their precious life was wasted in futile activities. They spent their time very meticulously and made an effort to make it as productive as possible. It is for this very reason that these men, in their sixty to seventy years of life accomplished what we today cannot even imagine, accomplishments that would normally take many lives to complete.

Look at the lives of the four great Imāms along with the lives of Imām Yūsuf, Imām Muhammad, Imām Zufar, Ibn Jarīr Tabrī, ‘Allāmā Nawawī, Ibn Hajar Al-‘Asqalānī, ‘Allāmā ‘Aynī, Ibn Taymiyyah, Jalāl Al-Dīn Suyūtī, Mullā ‘Alī Qarī, Mawlānā Rashīd Ahmad

WhatsApp, and the evils that are borne out of these harms should be presented to the Ummah so that they may save themselves from such evils. Therefore, we draw our attention to a few important points, which have been largely neglected.

USING WHATSAPP

Wasting time

Time is the most valuable asset we have; it cannot be bought and is a priceless commodity. Gold, silver, diamonds, pearls and money can all be recovered after being lost and in fact, regained to acquire more than what is lost. However, time is such an asset that once it is lost not a single second can be recovered. If time is not safeguarded then it will melt away like ice, and we will lose all opportunities to benefit from this asset.

To this day, all those who have made a name for themselves in history, and whichever field of life they have attained success, have done so by valuing their time. When we read how our predecessors valued time, it seems as if they were machines working round the clock. Not a single second of their precious life was wasted in futile activities. They spent their time very meticulously and made an effort to make it as productive as possible. It is for this very reason that these men, in their sixty to seventy years of life accomplished what we today cannot even imagine, accomplishments that would normally take many lives to complete.

Look at the lives of the four great Imāms along with the lives of Imām Yūsuf, Imām Muhammad, Imām Zufar, Ibn Jarīr Tabrī, ‘Allāmā Nawawī, Ibn Hajar Al-‘Asqalānī, ‘Allāmā ‘Aynī, Ibn Taymiyyah, Jalāl Al-Dīn Suyūtī, Mullā ‘Alī Qarī, Mawlānā Rashīd Ahmad

Gangohī, Mawlānā Qāsim Nanotwī, Mawlānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpurī, Mawlāna Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, Sheikh Al-Hadīth Mawlānā Muhammad Zakariyyā, Mawlānā 'Alī Miyā Nadwī, and the likes of our contemporary 'Ulamā, Muftī Sa'īd Pālanpūrī, Muftī Muhammad Taqī 'Uthmānī, Muftī Shu'aibullāh Khān Miftāhī etc, we see that in such a short period of time look at how many books and writings they have produced, and their efforts are still flowing in full flow, without any sign of stopping.

These are people, whose noble names still shine amidst us long after they passed because they valued the precious moments of their life and spent their time efficiently. They have left the world but through their religious and educational efforts they are alive within us, and Inshallāh till the last day the Ummah will benefit from their works.

We do not own our life and time. Allāh has bought our lives in return for Jannah, and we do not have the right to spend our life and time where we want and however we want. The owner is someone else, and we have to spend our life according to His wishes. In the Qurān, our creator, Allāh has revealed a complete chapter, 'Sura 'Asr', and in various chapters He has taken oath by the day and night and the morning and the evening to explain the importance of time. Similarly, Nabī ﷺ has also made it very clear through his comprehensive sayings how important safeguarding time is.

The prophet ﷺ said:

"The feet of Ibn Ādam will not move until he is questioned about five things: where he spent his life...?" [Tirmizī]

We must reflect over this Hadīth, which makes it very clear how important it is to cherish our time. If we have wasted our time then we will not be able move until we have answered Allāh, and the truth is that we will never be able to give a justifiable account of our wasted time. Therefore, it is imperative that we use our time wisely, and refrain from spending it in futile activities.

Today, one of the biggest robbers of our time is the misuse of WhatsApp. If we consider how our day is spent, we will realise that many hours are wasted on WhatsApp without us even realising, and neither do we pay any attention to it. We have never thought, how this damaging application is destroying the structure of our life, and how this enemy of ours is deceivingly taking away our precious time and we are very happily giving it away

.

For Allāh's sake! Let us ponder for a moment and think with a cool mind: isn't this a reality? Aren't our enemies behind our backs ready to snatch away our precious asset of time? If the answer is yes, and it certainly is, then we need to wake up and become cautious; we will need to start using these tools carefully; we will have to stay away from futile activities; and we will have to stay within the limits so that our enemies can never overpower us.

Wasting other people's time

This wasting of time is not limited to the user of WhatsApp itself, but rather transcends in its influence. The incorrect use of WhatsApp also wastes the time of others and interferes in their work, particularly, when it is used as a group. Most of the messages forwarded on the groups are messages that are of no use to the participants. When a message is received, it is opened unwillingly, and once finding it to be useless it is then discarded. In these few seconds the mind gets distracted and becomes confused. The tragedy is that when such people are kindly requested not to send unnecessary messages as it causes disruption, they become angry and start hurling abuses.

I am not part of any WhatsApp group. On an occasion, some friends added me to a group and started bombarding me with messages. When I tried to save myself by exiting the group, I was scorned and taunted at. On a similar occasion, one of my classmates who was studying with me at Darul 'Ulūm started messaging me. This distracted me from my studies. I politely requested him not to WhatsApp message me, and if there was an urgent need then we would talk directly over the phone.

What was there in my request that could make him angry? Till today, I am still surprised that he himself was guilty of sending unnecessary messages, but he became upset upon my request. Immediately, he sent me a message which was a clear expression of his anger, "If it is so, we have no relation from today, rather, till death".

The purpose of narrating this incident is for us to understand that by the incorrect use of WhatsApp we are also wasting other people's time. Is it not a sin to waste people's precious time? Is it not a sin to disturb others? It definitely is and therefore we must make an effort to stay away from such actions.

Allāh says in the Holy Qurān

"Give up open (exposed) and hidden (secret) sins" [Al-'An'ām, 120]

Distracts peace of mind

One of the major calamities of misusing WhatsApp is that it ruins one's peace of mind. Those people who are engaged in occupations that require single-mindedness and a peace of mind e.g. teaching, writing, issuing Fatāwa etc or even in any worldly occupation, when they use WhatsApp, within a few days their peace of mind is lost, they are distracted from their studies, and they get occupied reading or replying to messages. Consequently, it is seen that on one side a book is open, its pages are fluttering under a fan and the honourable individual is so engrossed in replying to a message that it seems as if something more important than studying has come up.

Let us think! Have we fulfilled the right of studying? When we enter a classroom with such studying, will we be able to fulfil the rights of those children of the Ummah who are in our hands? Is this not an usurpation of their rights? Adding insult to injury, sometimes the students are praying their Sabak while the teacher is busy with his mobile phone, on WhatsApp.

Unfortunately, during Salāh, whilst doing Zikr and during religious gatherings our state is the same.

At times, even during important meetings, a message is received on WhatsApp, and immediately the hand reaches for the pocket. As a result, the meeting is disrupted and everyone's attention is diverted. I am sure those of my Muslim brothers who have the least sense of their peace of mind will agree with me.

One day I received a phone call from a senior friend. In the course of the conversation I inquired about a controversial topic that was at that time circulating on WhatsApp. Very seriously, he told me that he did not use WhatsApp because it does not allow him to study wholeheartedly, the mind is not prepared to pick up a book, and it distances one away from studying books.

Without a doubt, every person who values his time and likes to have a peace of mind will have the same reply as my friend. May Allāh enter this into our heart also, and may he give us a peace of mind and the ability to give our full attention to our religious occupations.

The sin of spreading all kinds of news

Individuals who are members of a WhatsApp group or otherwise engrossed in the inappropriate usage of the application generally forward and spread everything they hear without verifying its authenticity. On two occasions in the Qurān, Allāh has prevented us from spreading everything we hear without verifying it. Thus, the Prophet also ﷺ said:

It is enough for a Muslim to be a liar that he narrates everything he hears. [Sahīh Muslim]

Now read the two verses within their contexts

First Āyat:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِن جَآءَكُمۡ فَاسِقُۢ بِنَبَإٖ فَتَبَيَّنُوٓاْ أَن تُصِيبُواْ قَوۡمَۢا بِجَهَٰلَةٖ فَتُصۡبِحُواْ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلۡتُمۡ نَٰدِمِينَ

O you who have Imān! If any sinner brings you any news, then verify it, lest you should harm any nation unknowingly and then become remorseful over your actions [Al-Hujurāt, 6]

Background

Hadhrat Hārith RA, the leader of the tribe of Banū Al-Mustaliq, narrates, "I came to the Prophet ﷺ. He invited me to Islām and ordered me to pay Zakāh. I embraced Islām and pledged to pay Zakāh. I also said to the Prophet ﷺ that I will go to my people, invite them to Islām, and ask them to pay the Zakāh. If they accept I will collect the Zakāh from them. I requested the Prophet ﷺ that on a specific date of a specific month, a collector be sent to me, so that I may handover the collected Zakāh to him.

Accordingly, Hadhrat Hārith RA collected the Zakāh from the believers of his clan, but as agreed, on the specific date the Zakāh collector did not arrive. Hadhrat Hārith RA feared that perhaps the Prophet ﷺ was angry with him, because it could never be that the Prophet ﷺ would not keep his promise. Hadhrat Hārith RA

expressed his fear to the leaders of the newly converts and planned to personally visit the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

According to some narrations, the Banū Al-Mustaliq tribe knew exactly what date the Zakāh collector was to arrive and they had already gone outside the town to receive him.

On the other hand, the Prophet ﷺ had already appointed Walīd b. 'Uqbah and sent him to collect the Zakāh from them. However, on his way, Walīd b. 'Uqbah feared for his life as he had old enemies with the tribe of Banū Al-Mustaliq. According to another narration, a mischief-maker told Hadhrat Walīd that the people of Banū Al-Mustaliq were planning to kill him. This confirmed his suspicions, and he immediately stopped and returned to the Prophet ﷺ in Madīnah. Under a misunderstanding, he told the Prophet ﷺ that the Banū Al-Mustaliq had refused to pay the Zakāh and wanted to kill him. This made the Prophet ﷺ very angry, and he dispatched an army under the command of Khālid b. Walīd RA, instructing him to make a thorough investigation, and to only fight them if found guilty. When Hadhrat Khālid b. Walīd RA faced the Banū Al-Mustaliq, he first inquired about the matter. They explained that they had not received the Zakāh collector, and that they had come out of the town to receive him, not to kill him. This conversation clarified the misconception. Thus, Khālid b. Walīd returned and informed the Prophet ﷺ that it was a misunderstanding that would have instigated a major conflict if it was not clarified.

It was after this incident that Allāh revealed the above verse, and thereby taught us a fundamental principle that, *if any sinner brings you any news, then verify it, lest you should harm any nation unknowingly and then become remorseful over your actions*

Second Āyat:

وَإِذَا جَآءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْنِ أَوِ ٱلْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا۟ بِهِۦ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰٓ أُو۟لِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْتَنۢبِطُونَهُۥ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ لَٱتَّبَعْتُمُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

When any matter of peace or fear comes to them, they broadcast it. If they had referred the matter to Rasulullāh ﷺ and to those of them who have understanding, it would surely be known to those of them who investigate the matter. If it were not for Allāh's grace and mercy on you, you would surely follow Shaytān except for a few. [Nisā, 83]

Background

A rumour was spread in Madīnah Munawwarah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had divorced his wives. As soon as Hadhrat 'Umar RA received this news he immediately headed to Masjid Nabawī. On reaching there he found a group of Sahāba discussing the issue. He told them to wait for him while he went to the Prophet ﷺ and investigated the truth of the matter.

The Prophet ﷺ told him that the news was false, and he had not divorced any of his wives. Hadhrat 'Umar RA thereafter made a public announcement that the news was false and the Prophet ﷺ had not divorced his wives.

Similarly, at times, when the Muslim army would be in battle with the disbelievers and hypocrites, the hypocrites within Madīnah would spread a false rumour that the Muslims had won the battle. Hearing this, the weak Muslims would become happy and complacent. On the other hand, sometimes they would spread the rumour that the Muslims were defeated, and this would create restlessness within the Muslims. Later, it would be found out that the rumours were baseless.

It is upon these incidents that the above verses were revealed.

The above verses clearly command us not to believe and spread every kind of news without investigating its authenticity. It teaches us that we should pass the information to those who have the ability to discern between right and wrong and they will assess its authenticity.

With the above verse and its background in front of us, it becomes clear that we should not believe everything we hear, and neither should we share it with other people without a thorough investigation into its authenticity and reliability. Sometimes, by believing or doing something without a proper investigation into its sources can lead to major tribulations within the Ummah. Similarly, when baseless information is spread and people start believing it, then this eventually causes worry and distress for some people although the information in reality has no truth to it.

Hand on heart, by misusing WhatsApp, are we not guilty of acting against the verses of the Holy Qurān?

Day and night, all kinds of useless and baseless content is being shared on WhatsApp, and not a single person makes an effort to verify its authenticity, as if something appearing on WhatsApp is itself a proof of its authenticity. At times, very casually sitting on our beds, we forward funny videos, jokes, pictures and useless other things.

A simple-folk made up a joke that a Buffalo ate a Jio sim card, and as a result, started giving unlimited milk and dung, and when the buffalo was examined by the doctors they said that it will not stop until 2017. People were laughing about it and sacrificing their precious time by forwarding this joke to others. For Allāh's sake! Think for a while! Is this the correct way to use WhatsApp? In the delicate times we are living in, where irreligiousness is common in every household, is it really our job to engage in sending such baseless jokes?

Junaid Jamshed's photo

Read this incident and take lesson from it. Maybe it will open our eyes, and we will start using WhatsApp correctly.

A famous personality of our neighbouring country (Pakistān), Junaid Jamshed passed away in an air accident. The accident was so serious that it was difficult to identify the bodies of the victims. After two to three days, when the dead bodies could not be identified

visually, it was probably on the third day that the bodies were identified through the help of DNA.

A clear photo of Junaid Jamshed was circulated on WhatsApp, and it was rumoured that it was his face in the photo after the accident, and people were spreading this photo all over social media. When one of my friends showed me the photo, immediately, Allāh put it in my heart that this could never be his photo. If it was really him and it was so clear, then why did it take so long for the investigation team to identify the body? And even that through DNA. By the grace of Allāh, it was later confirmed that it was in fact not him in the photo. Pity upon the Muslim simpleton, could he not have pondered for a moment over this information? If it truly was his picture then why was it not identified until the third day?

When this message was circulating on WhatsApp, and people were sharing it with tears in their eyes, it reminded me of Abū Al-Husayn Al-Rāwandī[1], who did

[1] Abū Al-Husayn Al-Rāwandī was a Mu'tazilite. The Mu'tazilite are a sect that do not believe in the punishment of the grave, thus, they reject those Ahādīth that prove the punishment of the grave assuming it to be illogical. As the Muslims, through the evidence of the Hadīth believe in the punishment of the grave, the Mu'tazili forged a Hadīth *"Eggplant is for whatever purpose it is eaten for"*, to taunt the Muslims that they don't use their brains and simply believe in everything that appears in the name of Hadīth.

Pity upon the Mu'tazilī that his intellect could not explain to him that the knowledge of the punishment of the grave has come through Wahī, and this is the third source of knowledge where our intellectual capacity ends. Since logic is the second source, how can one understand the things of the third source with it?

not believe in the punishment of the grave. He had forged a Hadīth, "Egg-plant is for whatever purpose it is eaten for". He had introduced this Hadīth to taunt the simple Muslims that they had no common sense, and if something as trivial as an egg-plant was presented to them with so many benefits, comparing it to Zamzam, the Muslim simpleton would believe it just because it was presented under the name of Hadīth.

Whether the Muslims of that time believed in his forged Hadīth or not, today, we have definitely fallen foul in this regard by accepting every "Hadīth" that appears on WhatsApp, and without any verification acting upon it and worse, circulating it to others. Whereas, in the Qurān Allāh talks about his beloved servants:

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُواْ بِـَٔايَـٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّواْ عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا

Those who, when they are reminded by the Āyāt of their Rabb, do not fall down deaf and blind [Al-Furqān, 73]

An incident

From this incident that occurred with Muftī Taqī 'Uthmānī Db you will get an idea of how far false news can go when it is forwarded without any verification.

Hadhrat Muftī Sāheb was asked whether one is rewarded for listening to the Qurān on a tape recorder. Muftī Sāheb replied, "It is rewarding, as one is listening to Allāh's words. However, it is more rewarding to listen and read directly from the Qurān." This statement was later shared with a second person then a third, and a

visually, it was probably on the third day that the bodies were identified through the help of DNA.

A clear photo of Junaid Jamshed was circulated on WhatsApp, and it was rumoured that it was his face in the photo after the accident, and people were spreading this photo all over social media. When one of my friends showed me the photo, immediately, Allāh put it in my heart that this could never be his photo. If it was really him and it was so clear, then why did it take so long for the investigation team to identify the body? And even that through DNA. By the grace of Allāh, it was later confirmed that it was in fact not him in the photo. Pity upon the Muslim simpleton, could he not have pondered for a moment over this information? If it truly was his picture then why was it not identified until the third day?

When this message was circulating on WhatsApp, and people were sharing it with tears in their eyes, it reminded me of Abū Al-Husayn Al-Rāwandī[1], who did

[1] Abū Al-Husayn Al-Rāwandī was a Mu'tazilite. The Mu'tazilite are a sect that do not believe in the punishment of the grave, thus, they reject those Ahādīth that prove the punishment of the grave assuming it to be illogical. As the Muslims, through the evidence of the Hadīth believe in the punishment of the grave, the Mu'tazili forged a Hadīth *"Eggplant is for whatever purpose it is eaten for"*, to taunt the Muslims that they don't use their brains and simply believe in everything that appears in the name of Hadīth.

Pity upon the Mu'tazilī that his intellect could not explain to him that the knowledge of the punishment of the grave has come through Wahī, and this is the third source of knowledge where our intellectual capacity ends. Since logic is the second source, how can one understand the things of the third source with it?

not believe in the punishment of the grave. He had forged a Hadīth, "Egg-plant is for whatever purpose it is eaten for". He had introduced this Hadīth to taunt the simple Muslims that they had no common sense, and if something as trivial as an egg-plant was presented to them with so many benefits, comparing it to Zamzam, the Muslim simpleton would believe it just because it was presented under the name of Hadīth.

Whether the Muslims of that time believed in his forged Hadīth or not, today, we have definitely fallen foul in this regard by accepting every "Hadīth" that appears on WhatsApp, and without any verification acting upon it and worse, circulating it to others. Whereas, in the Qurān Allāh talks about his beloved servants:

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُواْ بِـَٔايَـٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّواْ عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا

Those who, when they are reminded by the Āyāt of their Rabb, do not fall down deaf and blind [Al-Furqān, 73]

An incident

From this incident that occurred with Muftī Taqī 'Uthmānī Db you will get an idea of how far false news can go when it is forwarded without any verification.

Hadhrat Muftī Sāheb was asked whether one is rewarded for listening to the Qurān on a tape recorder. Muftī Sāheb replied, "It is rewarding, as one is listening to Allāh's words. However, it is more rewarding to listen and read directly from the Qurān." This statement was later shared with a second person then a third, and a

fourth, spreading far and wide until one day, Hadhrat Muftī Sāheb received a letter. The letter stated, a person in our locality was mentioning in his sermon that Muftī Taqī 'Uthmānī said, "To listen to the Qurān on a tape recorder is just like listening to music on a tape recorder."

Just look at what the original statement was, and what it turned out to be! Very brazenly, misquoting Muftī Sāheb, it is being said that to listen to the Qurān on a tape recorder is just like listening to music on a tape recorder. Hadhrat Muftī Sāheb remarked, "Even the Angels on my shoulders don't know whether I said this".

If we ponder over this, was this not because every person started narrating what he heard without any verification? Similarly, there are thousands of other religious and secular pieces of information circulating on WhatsApp, and there is no verification of the information and neither does anyone consider it necessary to verify it.

Should every kind of factual information be necessarily shared?

Let us assume for a while that the news being shared on WhatsApp is genuinely true. Even then, it is not wise to share or spread every kind of news. This is because in some cases, even if the news is true, it is not appropriate to publicise it in consideration of Islām and the Muslim community. By using WhatsApp as a group, it may be that certain news may be suitable for one individual but not for others. Someone may not want to hear about it but as a participant of a group they will have to unwillingly read or hear the news.

From this we learn that we must not make viral every kind of news even though it may be genuinely true. However, if there is hope of general benefit and it has no transitive harms then there is no harm sharing such information after it has been verified as true.

Whoever narrates whatever he hears is a liar

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught us not to narrate everything we hear, and he has declared a person who narrates everything he hears without any verification a liar. Thus, the Prophet ﷺ has said, "It is enough for a person to be liar that he narrates everything he hears".

Let us think! By misusing WhatsApp do we not come under the curse of this Hadīth? Are we not listed in the category of liars?

Carelessness can lead to slander

At times, carelessly publicising news on WhatsApp can lead to slander. Recently, someone spread a rumour about my honourable teacher Muftī Shu'aibullāh Khān that he held such and such opinion about a particular controversial issue. Without any verification this information was forwarded onto various groups, and ultimately it spread all over India, whereas, Mawlānā himself was unaware of this, and he had not even expressed his own opinion about the issue as of yet. Even then, this information was spread in his name. Was this not a slander on Muftī Sāheb? Was this not a blatant accusation? It undeniably was, with its root cause being WhatsApp.

fourth, spreading far and wide until one day, Hadhrat Muftī Sāheb received a letter. The letter stated, a person in our locality was mentioning in his sermon that Muftī Taqī 'Uthmānī said, "To listen to the Qurān on a tape recorder is just like listening to music on a tape recorder."

Just look at what the original statement was, and what it turned out to be! Very brazenly, misquoting Muftī Sāheb, it is being said that to listen to the Qurān on a tape recorder is just like listening to music on a tape recorder. Hadhrat Muftī Sāheb remarked, "Even the Angels on my shoulders don't know whether I said this".

If we ponder over this, was this not because every person started narrating what he heard without any verification? Similarly, there are thousands of other religious and secular pieces of information circulating on WhatsApp, and there is no verification of the information and neither does anyone consider it necessary to verify it.

Should every kind of factual information be necessarily shared?

Let us assume for a while that the news being shared on WhatsApp is genuinely true. Even then, it is not wise to share or spread every kind of news. This is because in some cases, even if the news is true, it is not appropriate to publicise it in consideration of Islām and the Muslim community. By using WhatsApp as a group, it may be that certain news may be suitable for one individual but not for others. Someone may not want to hear about it but as a participant of a group they will have to unwillingly read or hear the news.

From this we learn that we must not make viral every kind of news even though it may be genuinely true. However, if there is hope of general benefit and it has no transitive harms then there is no harm sharing such information after it has been verified as true.

Whoever narrates whatever he hears is a liar

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught us not to narrate everything we hear, and he has declared a person who narrates everything he hears without any verification a liar. Thus, the Prophet ﷺ has said, "It is enough for a person to be liar that he narrates everything he hears".

Let us think! By misusing WhatsApp do we not come under the curse of this Hadīth? Are we not listed in the category of liars?

Carelessness can lead to slander

At times, carelessly publicising news on WhatsApp can lead to slander. Recently, someone spread a rumour about my honourable teacher Muftī Shu'aibullāh Khān that he held such and such opinion about a particular controversial issue. Without any verification this information was forwarded onto various groups, and ultimately it spread all over India, whereas, Mawlānā himself was unaware of this, and he had not even expressed his own opinion about the issue as of yet. Even then, this information was spread in his name. Was this not a slander on Muftī Sāheb? Was this not a blatant accusation? It undeniably was, with its root cause being WhatsApp.

Whether WhatsApp is being used as a group or not, by incorrectly using WhatsApp, people generally tend to publicise everything they hear, and such a person is a liar in the eyes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Taking photos

Islamically, taking photos unnecessarily and storing them is Harām and a major sin. It is the unanimous consensus of the ‘Ulamā, and there are many clear-cut Ahādīth in regard to this. We will only mention a few Ahādīth so that we may understand how detested it is in the eyes of Allāh and his messenger ﷺ.

Hadhrat ‘Āysha RA narrates: “Rasulullāh ﷺ came home, and in the house, there was a curtain with images on it. On seeing the image, the colour of the prophet’s face changed, and He tore the curtain. He then said, “The people with the severest punishment on the Day of Judgment will be those who try to mimic the creation of Allāh”

Hadhrat ‘Abdullāh b. Mas’ūd RA says, “I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say, “The people with the severest punishment on the Day of Judgment will be those who make pictures””

Hadhrat Qatādah RA narrates, “I was sitting with Hadhrat ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās RA. He was asked about making pictures. He said, ‘I heard Muhammad ﷺ say, “Whoever makes a picture in the world will be ordered to put a soul into the picture, and he will not be able to do so.”””

.

Hadhrat Abū Talhā RA narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Angels do not enter a house that has a picture or a dog”.

Likewise, on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ knocked down the idols saying:

جاء الحق وزهق الباطل

Similarly, Hadhrat ‘Alī RA sent Abū Al-Hayyāj to destroy images, telling him:

”الا ابعثک علی ما بعثنی علیہ رسول اللہ ﷺ ان لا تدع تمثالا الا طمستہ“

“Should I not send you on the same [mission] as Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ sent me? Do not leave any image without obliterating it…”

All these narrations and many other Ahādith clearly prove that taking photos and storing them are a means of receiving the wrath of Allāh and his Rasūl ﷺ. It is for this reason that ‘Ulamā have made it unlawful to take pictures of any kind of animate objects, figurative or non-figurative, just as ‘Allāmā Nawawī RA comments on the above Hadīth, “It commands him to obliterate all animate images.”

The misuse of WhatsApp has caught people in another major sin, to such an extent that they are no longer conscious of it, and this is sharing photos. Many times, people make irrelevant and unnecessary videos and then post them on WhatsApp. Some people are so fond of seeing themselves in different styles that throughout the day they take numerous photos of themselves. It is sad to say, that as well as the general public who are obsessed with these things, even some of ‘Ulamā are guilty of this. They are seen taking pictures of themselves, their children and their families, and then posting it on WhatsApp. Allāh forgive, sometimes we can tell from

the profile picture that it is a photo of an ʻĀlim, wearing a Topī, Kurtā and a beard yet they have set their own photo as their profile picture.

Are the leaders of the Ummah not aware of the above-mentioned Ahādīth, and the threat within them? The reality is that in using WhatsApp, we have gone to such extremes that we no longer have the capability to understand what is right and what is wrong, or is it that we no longer have the ability to act accordingly to what is right?

Not even safe in the Haram

Photography and video recording has become so widespread that even the holy and blessed places, like the Haram, are not safe from it.

Just recently, Allāh, through his sheer mercy granted me the opportunity to perform ʻUmrah. During this journey, from the amount of photography and video recording I witnessed, you could clearly tell that people no longer come for worship; they just come for a holiday. The prediction of Nabī ﷺ is turning out to be one hundred percent true, "A time will come when the rich people of my Ummat will perform hajj as a holiday". There was not a place where people were not seen taking photos and videos.

I would like to share with you a few incidents which were very saddening. May Allāh give us the ability to stay away from such actions.

First incident

I was once trying to get to the door of the Ka'ba and the Multazam. Because this is a place where Du'ās are accepted, there was a large crowd, and people were moving forward with great difficulty. Ahead of me, I saw a lady walking towards the Multazam with great difficulty. When she reached the Multazam, she made some space for herself and then took out her mobile phone from her purse and started taking a video.

Where did the respect for the sanctity of the Multazam go? I could not control myself and I rebuked her very harshly, but she was so absorbed that my advice had no effect on her.

Second incident

Once, I saw a person in the Matāf: he gave his phone to someone and said to them, "I will raise my hands as if I am making Du'ā and you take a photo of me". He had his back towards the Ka'ba, and he was having a photo taken of himself making Du'ā just to give his family and friends the false impression that he is busy making Du'ā.

Third incident

While in Madīnah Munawwarah I was going to visit the blessed grave of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. I was walking very slowly with utmost respect, considering the sanctity of the place. Just as I had gone forward after offering my Salām, I saw a man behind me; as soon as he reached the Blessed Rawdhah he took out his mobile phone and started taking a video. He abruptly delivered his Salām, and I saw with my own eyes that when he was doing so

he was facing the Qiblah, at a time when the back is usually towards the Qiblah. His complete focus was on recording the video.

My brothers! Think where are we standing? Which personality have we gone to greet? To whom have we gone to intercede for our forgiveness?

Fourth incident

I was once in Jannat al-Baqī', and the police were not allowing anyone to read the Qurān at the graves. As I was gently walking and reciting the Qurān, someone came to me, gave me their phone and told me to take a picture of them standing by the grave. Very sternly I scolded him, and said to him that Nabī ﷺ told us to visit the graves so that it may remind us of the hereafter and not to take photos. Eventually, he left without saying anything.

These were just a few incidents that particularly bothered me. Taking photos at the Matāf, Maqām-e-Ibrāhīm, Hatīm, Multazam, door of the Ka'bah, Safā, Marwah, grave of the Prophet ﷺ, Riyādh Al-Jannah, Jannat Al-Baqī', Jannat Al-Ma'lā and other locations is a common thing, and there is nobody to explain that these are places of worship and not places for photography or videography. Some people are seen in the Matāf spending hours on a video call. They don't know whether they are sitting at a tourist place or in the house of Allāh.

After little thought, we realise that one of the main reasons people are still involved in photography and videography, despite knowing that it is Harām, is our multimedia mobile phones. These phones have removed the thought of photos being Harām from our hearts. In practice, people are not ready to accept it as Harām, even though they may accept it to be Harām in principle.

One of the reasons why Facebook and WhatsApp have increased photo taking and video making, even though they were essentially designed for communication purposes, is because people generally want to post their photos on these apps.

Allāh has created everything for us. 'خلق لكم ما فى الارض جميعا', and only we have to take advantage from it all. However, we must take care that we take advantage of these things by staying within the limits set by Allāh, and not according to our own personal desires and whims. May Allāh give us the ability to act accordingly.

The loss of interaction and sociability

One of the major drawbacks of WhatsApp is that it has distanced us from those closest to us. A father, mother, sister and relatives can all be in the same house, but all occupied with their phones. Albeit present in the same house and even in the same room, hours pass by with minimal or no interaction with each other. Think! Will this not create division? Will it not devastate our children's habits? Isn't a natural consequence of such addiction that love for parents will come out of their hearts, and moreover would it not be a sin for us not to do their Tarbiyyah properly?

Thought-provoking incident

You have just read that WhatsApp has cut us off from each other. My beloved colleague Mawlānā Sayyid Khālid Sāheb Qāsmī - Teacher at Jami'ah Islāmiyah Masīh Al-'Ulūm, Bangalore - narrated an incident in regards to this. He narrates that a year ago his grandfather passed away. His relatives came to visit him to pay their condolences. Chairs were brought in for them; they sat down and immediately took out their phones. He mistook that they had come to pay condolences upon the death of his grandfather, thus he should go and sit with them. However, the greater tragedy was that when he went and sat with them, they all remained engaged on their phones, sending messages to each other; not once did they look away from their phones. When this went on for some time, he got up and

left the room. They continued to be on their phones until after a while they also got up and left.

Where was the condolence? What of the rights of the deceased and his surviving family? How appalling! They had come to pay their condolences but their phones and WhatsApp kept them so busy that they did not utter a word of condolence, and left just as they had come.

This is its effect; its users are so fervently intoxicated by it that they squander every minute either checking their messages or circulating things in vain.

A joke

Our principal, Muftī Shu'aibullāh Khān DB narrated a funny incident. A family dispute was brought to a judge, and every party presented its grievance. The judge heard the case and then said, "After listening to your complaints it seems like you are always arguing with each other. Is there a time in the day that passes without any arguments?" One of them replied, "Dear judge! Yes, there is a fortunate time that passes without any arguments" The judge asked, "When is that?" He replied, "When we are all on our mobile phones."

Misuse of the Internet

So far, we have read about some of the drawbacks of misusing WhatsApp; but after a little thought, we realise that the root cause of all these countless evils is the misuse of the Internet itself. This is because without the Internet, we cannot use WhatsApp or any other app such as Facebook etc. On the Internet, there is always the danger that one will fall into the wrong things. It could be said with total conviction that no other invention has caused as much damage as the Internet has done, by: ruining our social life, spreading evil and immodesty, spoiling the character of our youngsters, instilling evil habits within people and by making it easy to commit sins.

Previously, there were TVs in people's homes: today, every person carries in his pocket something more dangerous and susceptible to sinning: the multimedia mobile phone.

If we wish for a better society, free from immorality with modesty in its place; for the germs of sin to be replaced with virtuous deeds; for an end to the moral decline; for people to be endowed with good character and for it to be easy to do good and save oneself from sin, then we must make a firm resolution, that if we cannot completely abandon the Internet, then we will at least use it very cautiously. The Internet should only be used for religious and legitimate worldly necessities. Other than this, we should stay away from it. Otherwise, there

is a chance that we will be influenced by its evils and we will fall into all the aforementioned vices, as we witness today. It will not be inaccurate to say that most people are using it in a manner that is more damaging than beneficial, and this is destroying our society and our morality.

The Internet is addictive

A few drawbacks of the Internet have been mentioned above. Another drawback of the Internet is that it is very addictive and attractive. It is a never-ending cycle, where you go on opening a new page after another. It so happens that the purpose for which we opened a page remains unfulfilled and we get caught up in ten other things. Time is wasted, and at the end of it nothing is achieved. It is because of this misuse that many people fall into sin because predominantly, the Internet is full of sin and avenues to commit sin. Sometimes, one even thinks that maybe our enemies invented these things purposefully to spread evil and immorality.

Another incident

While I was studying Iftā in Dārul 'Ulūm Deoband, a student from Lebanon, Mahmūd, came to study there. His teacher in Lebanon was a graduate of Deoband and he often talked about the 'Ulamā of Deoband, and praised their knowledge, expertise in all fields of science, excellent manners and character, high degree of piety and purity, unparalleled humility, proverbial Istighnā, their distinctive hall mark and how they were a true verbal and practical embodiment of Islām. After hearing these merits of the 'Ulamā of Deoband he had an

urge to go and benefit from them. He subsequently came to Dārul 'Ulūm and during his stay, for approximately a month, he searched for the qualities his teacher had talked about in the teachers. When he found the teachers to be as he had heard from his teacher, he returned to Lebanon and then came back to Darul 'Ulūm, this time as an official student. Although arrangements had already been made for him to stay in Dārul 'Ulūm's guest house, he lived in a rented house outside the Madrassah, and he would participate in the lectures of the teachers at his own comfort. During this period, I realised that he wasn't as punctual in his lessons as he should have been. One day, in a friendly manner I said to him, "You came all the way from Lebanon, specifically to benefit from the teachers here, but you are not punctual with your lessons." Regretfully, he replied, "What can I do? In the morning when I go on the Internet, I go on opening page after page. Hours pass by without me realising, and by the time you know it, the lessons have already finished."

This is what the Internet is known for; it entraps a person in such a way that it becomes almost impossible to come out of it.

Wasting money

Another major drawback of the Internet is the amount of money wasted behind its guise. This wealth that Allāh has given us is indeed a very great blessing, and only truly appreciated by those who live a life of poverty. Therefore, it is important that we spend our wealth correctly, and that we do not waste it in useless avenues.

Otherwise, on the Day of Judgment, when we will be asked regarding our wealth in respect of where and how we acquired it, and where we spent it, we will not be able to answer Allāh.

People spend a good amount of money buying internet packages or topping it up, and then using it for unnecessary and sometimes sinful purposes. Is this not wasting money? On the Day of Judgment, we will be questioned for wasting it in avenues that eventually placed a burden of sins upon our shoulders. Is it sensible for us to waste our money like this without any consideration? Is it not the height of foolishness that we labour day in day out, and then exchange our hard-earned money for sins?

Recently, during my trip to 'Umrah there was a huge sign board somewhere in Makkah that read, *"10 GB for 90 days, 130R"*. If you were to calculate, then 130R amounts to two and a half thousand Rupees (approx £25). Did the Hājī go to Makkah to spend so much money on such useless things? Many people who go for Hajj and 'Umrah buy internet packages and then use it very liberally during their stay. May Allāh give us the true understanding.

A plea to the public

It is quite clear from the above lines that if we do not use these services carefully then they will lead us to failure in this world and the hereafter.

Now, I urge all my brothers and sisters to keep in mind the purpose of our creation and keep the life of the hereafter in front of us. We need to think: how are we going to present ourselves before Allāh? What have we made of this temporary life? Where have we spent its moments? We must keep all this in mind to stay on the right track, to stay away from sins, to use Allāh's blessings correctly, and to benefit from everything he has created lawfully. We must take special care that we do not use WhatsApp and the Internet inappropriately. Just as these technologies are destroying our hereafter, they are also creating huge problems for our Muslims in our respected countries, and with regards to this, the scholars have advised our youngsters with heartfelt sincerity that the improper use of these tools is creating huge problems for Muslims in their respective countries. Let it not be that due to our carelessness the whole Ummah becomes a victim of suffering and misfortune. (May Allāh save us all)

Request to the 'Ulamā

Indeed, I am not in a position to advise the 'Ulamā, and the proverb "small wit, great boast" is at the back of my mind, but unfortunately because of the carelessness shown by the 'Ulamā in this regard, my heart says that I should also apologetically make a request to the guides of the Ummah. I hope that the 'Ulamā will pardon my shortcomings and lack of respect.

'Ulamā are the heirs of the Prophets, and it is proven from the Hadīth that the Prophets do not leave behind wealth, but rather they leave behind knowledge of Dīn,

which the 'Ulamā have inherited. The 'Ulamā can only be called the rightful heirs of the Prophets when they take up the mission of the Prophets, because it is indeed a great mission. The mission which we recognise as, "Allāh's divine law". Every Prophet came with one purpose, and that was to explain this law to the people. To explain that it is imperative that we consider the limits set by Allāh when benefiting from his created things. There is no scope to divert or cross those limits under any circumstances, even if one's heart is broken, desires are trampled upon, close ones become strangers, you become a target of taunts or you face apparent failure; no matter what happens, under no circumstance are we allowed to violate the commands of Allāh. Rather, we should not even think contrary to it. It was this very mission that the Prophets carried out and then left the world. Now, it is the responsibility of every individual of this blessed group of 'Ulamā to take this mission forward, and to inform the Ummah that, yes, we have to live in this world, and we have to use its means, but we will do so according to the way shown by Allāh.

Now consider this: the 'Ulamā acquired this knowledge in the Madāris, they inherited from the prophets, and now if they were to take a backseat, waste their time in useless activities and disregard the responsibility of this mission of Nubuwwah, how woeful would this be?

Very politely, it is a request to the 'Ulamā that let us be mindful of our mission and think about our responsibility as 'Ulamā. Inshallāh by doing this we will be saved from the evils of WhatsApp, Facebook, the Internet etc. A lot

of our time will be guarded and used for religious services; furthermore, Allāh will guide many people through us and he will make us shining lanterns, from which the Ummah will benefit.

It is distressing to say that today, many 'Ulamā are trapped in this marsh of WhatsApp and the Internet. It has made them neglectful of their responsibilities. What we need to do as 'Ulama is to make sure that we ourselves only use these things as and when needed, and then educate the Ummah to use these things for the correct religious and worldly purposes.

'Ulamā are role models, and therefore, they will need to have a very high standard because only then will they be able to lead the Ummah correctly.

Request to students

Respected students! You have come to these Madāris from different areas and towns to study the Dīn of Allāh; rather, you have been chosen to be here. If you were to investigate your own towns and localities, you would realise that many youngsters have taken up admissions in colleges and universities. Only a handful of people have taken admissions in the Madāris to study the Dīn of Allāh, and indeed it is these people who have been chosen by Allāh for this.

You are going to be a given a huge responsibility. Every individual from amongst you will be responsible for multiple localities and towns; you will have to share the worry and concern for their religious and communal

well-being; you will have to take the Ummah out of the marsh of irreligiousness and bring them upon the path of righteousness. The Ummah is suffering and there is no one to give it a helping hand. The Ummah is thirsty waiting for you. You are the only ones who can quench its thirst. The Ummah is facing all kinds of trials and tribulations from every direction. There is Fitna upon Fitna, and every new Fitna is more severe than the previous one; at this critical moment, it is only you who can rescue the Ummah out of this. Soon, you will be a very valuable asset for the Ummah. You came to the Madāris with a great purpose; you left behind family and friends so that firstly, you can become a human in the true sense, and then make worry and concern for others.

Think for a while: when your goals are so high, your responsibilities are so important, and your field of work is so vast, how much effort will be needed? How obsessed should you be with your work? Will we ever be able to achieve these high goals when we are tied to our phones, when watching sports is our favourite hobby, and when we have a habit of always joking and roaming around with friends? Will we ever be able to guide the Ummah like this? Will we be able to free ourselves to serve them? Will we be free from technological shackles in order to free them from the same? Never! We will never be able to do this. If we really want to be successful and achieve our goals, we will first and foremost have to limit our use of mobile phones, especially during our studies; we will have to accept and believe that it is our enemy. Today, there is nothing more dangerous for a student than the mobile phone. It

does not let them focus on their goals, it ruins their manners and character and it has distanced them from their ambitions. Generally, a student will have no purpose or target in his mind, and simply attends classes superficially.

My honourable brothers! There was a time when Mawlānā Nānotwī Ra was a student like me and you; it was only later that he became Hujjat Al-Islām, Sheikh Al-Hind Ra only became Sheikh Al-Hind after passing through the stages of being a student; Mawlānā Madnī Ra was also a student before he became Sheikh Al-Islām; 'Allāmā Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī Ra sat as a student like me and you in front of his teachers before he became Ra'īs Al-Muhaddithīn; Hadhrat Thānwī Ra was also a student before he became Hakīm Al-Ummat. If we want to shine like our elders and if we want to be the saviours of this Ummah, we will have to give our total focus to our studies; we will have to spend our student days just as our elders spent it and we will have to sacrifice ourselves for the acquisition of knowledge. For this, it is important that we distance ourselves from all futile activities, and completely free ourselves for the purpose of seeking knowledge.

The mobile phone is the greatest criminal when it comes to diverting us away from our work. Be it in studies, during Zikr or during Salāh, it creates problems for us everywhere; despite this, we still remain loyal to them as if we have pledged our unwavering allegiance to them.

For Allāh's sake! Keep it away from you lest it take you away from your purpose, ruin your peace of mind, taint your character and waste your time.

In today's environment, you might find my advising you to stay away from your mobile phones quite strange. You might think that I am backward minded, old-fashioned, or you might even say that I am outlandish; but I can tell you with full certainty and firm conviction that you will never be able to achieve your goals until you do not let go of these phones.

Alhamdulillah, in Jāmi'ā Masīh Al-'Ulūm using any kind of mobile phone is forbidden. This has created many positive results and whenever there is a need to contact family, it is fulfilled by some other means on a weekly or monthly basis. If this is not possible in some of the bigger Madrassahs then as a minimum there should at least be some sort of restrictions in order to alleviate the spreading of this global pandemic the root cause of many evils. May Allāh give us the ability, and may he give all the students of Dīn the ability to study with full focus.

Positive use of WhatsApp and the Internet

Whatever I have mentioned above regarding WhatsApp and the Internet is to warn and prevent people from misusing it. I do not intend to make it completely unlawful. It is possible that people will assume that I am advising people to completely abandon WhatsApp and the Internet, which is almost impossible in today's technological world. Therefore, in order to clear any misconceptions, I have included a separate heading, explaining how we can make positive use of these technologies.

It is evident from the Qurān, that Allāh has created everything for our own benefit. Therefore, when everything has been created for us, we have to benefit from it and fulfil our necessities using it. However, what will be the method of seeking benefit from these things? We will not decide ourselves, but rather, we will use that one method which Allāh taught our prophet, Muhammad ﷺ. By no way is it acceptable that we ignore Allāh's laws and limits and use his created things according to our own desires.

To some extent, we rely on WhatsApp and the Internet for our religious and worldly needs and sometimes it even becomes a necessity. A month's' work can be completed in a week, things previously inaccessible become readily available and because of these services, many people are able to carry out tasks during a journey

that they would normally carry out at home. In a similar vein, there are many other benefits, and it is for this reason that I do not have the courage to completely call a ban upon these things. But again, I reiterate what I mentioned previously that we need to take great care when using these things. We need to use it sparingly, as a means, and not waste time with it or make it a hobby to pass the time. We must not share futile content needlessly or forward everything we hear. Parents at home should try their best to keep their young children away from these things. They must not give their infant children a phone to play with as there is a great fear that these innocent flowers will wither before they come to bloom. In particular, we must keep the circumstances of our own countries in front of us all the time; let it not be that because of us the Muslims have to suffer. The Ummah is going through very delicate times. By Allāh! Have mercy upon the Ummah and stay concerned about your own and the Ummah's welfare.

WhatsApp's legal status

In my opinion, it is quite easy to derive a legal ruling for WhatsApp from what I have mentioned above. However, with the advice of my seniors I am designating a separate heading for this, so that those who cannot keep themselves within the limits of Shari'ah when using WhatsApp may have a clear understanding of the Islamic legal ruling.

WhatsApp, just like the Internet is such a tool that if it contains benefit it also has a harmful side and the harms are much greater than the benefits as is evident to its

users. Therefore, anything that contains harm and benefit should be utilised very cautiously so that we can save ourselves from its harms.

WhatsApp's legal ruling: it will be unlawful to use WhatsApp if it is to be used for sinful purposes. Therefore, it will be unlawful to use WhatsApp if it used for:

1. Backbiting

This can be in many forms e.g. to mention something inappropriate about someone, to mimic someone's voice, to make a video mimicking a person's style or to edit someone's picture and then put it on WhatsApp in such a way that if the person was to find out then he would feel offended. All these forms come under the category of backbiting. Allah says in the holy Quran:

وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ

Never backbite about each other. Do any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother, which you so detest? [Al-Hujurāt, 12]

2. Slandering

To write something about someone or to attribute something towards him which he is innocent of.

Allah says:

وَلَوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُم مَّا يَكُونُ لَنَآ أَن نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهَـٰذَا سُبْحَـٰنَكَ هَـٰذَا بُهْتَـٰنٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَعِظُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ أَن تَعُودُوا۟ لِمِثْلِهِۦٓ أَبَدًا إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

When you heard about it, why did you not say, "It is not appropriate for us to discuss this, Allah is pure! This is a great slander"

Allah advises you against repeating the same ever again if you really are believers. [Al-Nūr, 16-17]

3. Taking and sharing pictures of living things

There are many clear cut Ahādith that forbid photos, therefore, if WhatsApp is used for this purpose then again, it will be unlawful. Yes, however, if there is a necessity e.g. photo for a passport, photo for a job application or for identity of proof then this is a lawful exception.

4. Forwarding false information without any verification

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ

كُلُّ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا

And do not pursue what you have no knowledge about. Indeed questioning shall take place with regard to the ears, eyes and the hearts. [Al-Isrā, 36]

Likewise:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِن جَآءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌۢ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوٓا۟ أَن تُصِيبُوا۟

قَوْمًۢا بِجَهَٰلَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَٰدِمِينَ

O you who have Imān! If any sinner brings you any news, then verify it, lest you should harm any nation unknowingly and then become remorseful over your actions. [Al-Hujurāt, 6]

Hadīth:

It is enough for a Muslim to be a liar that he narrates everything he hears. [Sahīh Muslim]

5. Immodesty

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا۟ ٱلْفَوَٰحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ

And do not draw near to immoral acts that may be open and secret [Al-An'ām, 151]

وَذَرُوا۟ ظَٰهِرَ ٱلْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُۥٓ

Give up open and secret sins [Al-An'ām, 121]

6. Using it during work hours without the manager's permission.

This will be considered as theft and a breach of trust. Allāh says in the Holy Qurān:

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تُؤَدُّوا۟ ٱلْأَمَٰنَٰتِ إِلَىٰٓ أَهْلِهَا

Verily Allāh instructs you to return trusts to their rightful owners. [Al-Nisā, 58]

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْخَآئِنِينَ

Verily Allāh does not like those who betray. [Al-Anfāl, 58]

7. Sending unnecessary content which causes difficulty to the recipients.

It is a sin to cause difficulty to others.

8. Sending useless lengthy articles, baseless stories, fake videos and speeches and literature which ruin our Imān and 'Aqā'id.

All this wastes people's time, it causes them difficulty and most dangerously it ruins ones Iman and Aqaid.

Conclusively, if WhatsApp is going to be used for activities that do not come under the limits set by the Sharī'ah then it will be unlawful to use WhatsApp, and if it is used for religious purposes or for permissible worldly purposes then it will be lawful to use WhatsApp.

The Internet's legal status

Honourable readers! I have already mentioned above my advice regarding WhatsApp and the Internet: it should only be used for necessary and legal worldly and religious needs. However, after looking at its harms and evils, some people advised me that I should declare it to be unlawful altogether, so that people may abandon it and thereby be saved from its immorality and evils. However, considered as a whole, I was not convinced. I found myself in a dilemma, and I was hesitant to take this bold step. Therefore, I did not go ahead with it.

Unexpectedly, Allāh assisted me, and I came across a very researched and detailed ruling in Muftī Shu'aibullāh's book, *"TV from an Islamic perspective"* under the title, *"legal ruling of the Internet"*. In accordance to Muftī Sāheb's Fatwā, in this very book, I also came across the resolutions laid out by Idārah Al-Mabāhith Al-Fiqhiyya, Jam'iyyat 'Ulamā Al-Hind (Islamic Fiqh Academy)[1] in their 8th Fiqh seminar on the issue of using TV and the Internet for religious purposes. I was delighted to have come across this material as this ended my dilemma.

[1] 8th seminar of Islamic Fiqh Academy, India, which took place: 17,18,19 Rabī' Al-Awwal 1426- 27,28,29 April 2005, Bangalore

I hereby present Hadhrat Muftī Sāheb's complete Fatwā in its question and answer form, and likewise the Islāmic Fiqh Academy's approved proposals in relation to the Internet. I am hopeful that Inshāllāh these two shall pave the way forward for us.

The Fatwā

Question: Islamically, is it permissible to use the Internet, and what is its legal ruling? We have seen many 'Ulamā use it, and it is also used in many Madrassahs. If it is permissible, then what is the difference between the Internet and TV, and why do the 'Ulamā regard TV as Harām, when we know that the Internet is worse?

Answer: The Internet is a technology which can be used for both, good and bad. It is evident that the Internet makes many of our religious and educational tasks easy and convenient. Yes, with this, it is also true that it has opened the doors to evil and immorality, and those who have no sense of modesty and morality are making good use of its evil side, because of which many youngsters have ruined their lives. But the truth is that this misuse of the Internet is due to their personal depravity and corruptness, otherwise, they could have used it for good causes. Keeping this in mind, we cannot give the Internet and watching TV the same ruling.

An obvious difference between the two is that everything displayed on the TV screen is not at our discretion. It is managed by the broadcasters, and whatever they want to show is what is shown on the screens; as a result, whatever is shown will necessarily be watched.

Currently, none of the programmes that are being broadcasted are within the limits of Sharīa'h. If not anything unlawful, these programmes certainly have pictures, and it is quite clear that pictures are Harām. It is for this reason that 'Ulamā regard watching TV to be Harām.

On the contrary, we have some sort of control when using the Internet. Even though it is full of impermissible and immoral content, however, if a religious, pious person wishes to use it for legitimate purposes, then no doubt there will be much useful and beneficial content available for him. For this reason, the 'Ulamā regard it to be permissible for legitimate purposes, and impermissible if it is going to be used for Harām purposes.

Conclusively, the Internet contains good and bad content; therefore, we cannot declare it to be completely harām and we will have to expound upon its ruling. If it is used for the wrong purposes then it is harām, and if it is used for good purposes then it is permissible.

TV, on the contrary only contains impermissible content which, as a minimum, contains pictures of living things which is obviously Harām. Therefore, there is no need to expound upon its ruling, and it will be regarded as Harām.

If the question arises that even the Internet contains pictures and rather, one is exposed to indecent pictures and it is impossible to avoid them, then the Internet

should also be Harām like TV, or should TVs then be considered permissible for use?

Even though indecent pictures do appear on the Internet, they are not purposefully intended; it depends largely on the user. For example, if a person is walking on a road and by chance his gazes fall upon a woman, then it does not necessarily mean that to walk on that road is now Harām. It will be advised not to look at the woman and pass by with eyes lowered.

Yes, if someone's intention is to look and stare at women then for him to walk on that road will be Harām. Similarly, if someone uses the Internet with the intention of surfing and watching immoral and indecent content then it will be Harām for him to use it. If the intention is pure and righteous, and after this if involuntarily, indecent pictures appear then it will be advised to safeguard our gazes.

Resolutions of Islamic Fiqh academy, Jam'iyyat 'Ulamā Al-Hind

The Internet in our era is a source of information in which all kinds of good and bad content can be found. Even though today it is being used more for the wrong reasons, if we were to stay within the limits ordained by Islām then we will be saved from its evils and through it we will be able to achieve a great amount of educational, economical and administrative achievements. For this reason, the Islamic Fiqh Academy finds it permissible to use the Internet within the limits of Sharī'ah, and finds it impermissible for illegitimate purposes.

A Final request

Lastly, I would like to leave a message for all my Muslim brothers: it is our responsibility to forbid from evil. Therefore, first and foremost we must make a firm intention that we will save ourselves from the harms of the Internet, and secondly, as much as we can we will also save our brothers from misusing the Internet; we will make all the effort to make evident the harms of misusing WhatsApp, Social media and the Internet, whether it be through writing, through speech, individually or collectively, we will use all means possible to save the Ummah from its evils.

Allāh is our helper and he is the best Guardian